

Bequette Ranch



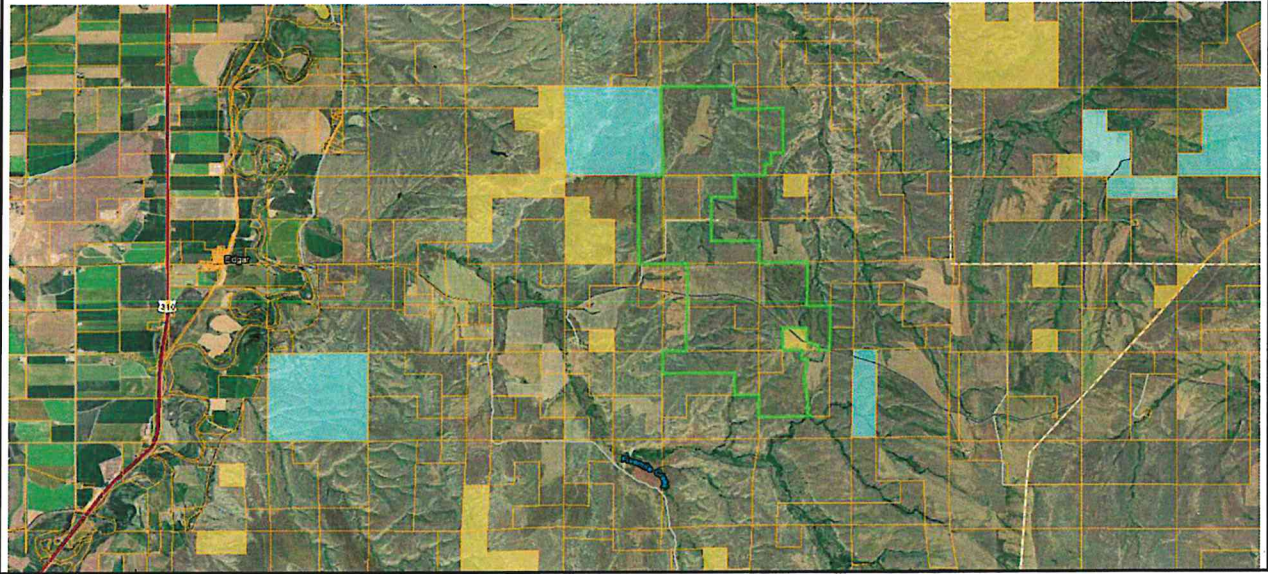
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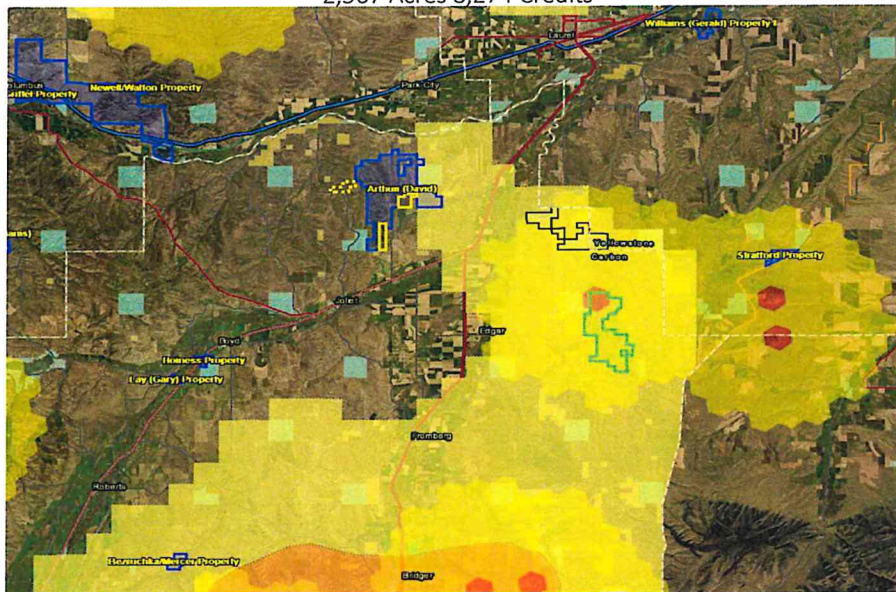


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Bequette Ranch Receives National Recognition for Sage Grouse Conservation

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNFrKtYd0_Q
- <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mt/programs/landscape/STELPRDB1259458/>
- https://billingsgazette.com/lifestyles/recreation/film-follows-local-sage-grouse-volunteers/article_109989f4-fb6e-5e9d-80fb-7a7485ee076a.h
- <https://www.sagegrouseinitiative.com/field-stream-magazine-shoot-film-sage-grouse-initiative-volunteer-day-montana-may-10/>

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Bequette Ranch Sage Grouse 2020



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Financials

- Estimated Easement Value (25%): \$200,547
- Fixed Project Costs: \$20,000
- MSGOT Funding Request: \$220,547 (Easement Purchase & Fixed Project Costs)
- Matching Funds: NRCS-ALE \$601,641 (Easement Purchase)

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Problem and Threat Analysis

- Conversion of sagebrush grassland to cropland and habitat fragmentation are widely recognized as major culprits in the decline of the greater sage grouse.
- Conservation easements on the Fauth Ranch and Bequette Ranch will protect against conversion and provide connectivity between private and public lands.



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Easement Terms and Conservation Benefit

- Current state of easement negotiations:
- "No build" will be designated as that portion within a 0.6 mile buffer of existing sage grouse leks.
- Prohibition on surface mining
- Prohibition cropland conversion
- New road construction for residential access only
- Turbine style wind-energy development will be prohibited
- Where possible and economically feasible, landowners will require new power and communication infrastructure to be buried.



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MLR Monitoring Policy

In an effort to discharge MLR's obligation to the public, staff shall monitor each conservation easement annually conducting appropriate discussions with the owner and/or manager about terms of the easement, condition of the land, and its management, and prepare suitable file documentation. Stewardship staff shall be given maximum discretion to tailor monitoring needs, including site visits and stewardship opportunities, to the particular characteristics of the property, the easement, and the property owner. Adopted 2/10/98



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Conclusion



- Core and general sage grouse habitat protected.
- Provides connectivity to public and private lands.
- Easements will protect habitat in perpetuity in an area vulnerable to cultivation and under high threat of development.
- All parcels generate credits
- The Montana Land Reliance is committed to ensuring the easement is completed and monitored.
- Landowners are committed to the project.



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